



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

APR 15 2010

Property: **Red Star Café, 531 Ninth Street, Augusta, Georgia**  
Project Number: **24219 – Part 1**

Dear .

My review of your appeal of the decision of the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, denying your request for certification of significance for the property referenced above is concluded. The appeal was made in accordance with Department of the Interior regulations (36 CFR Part 67) governing certifications for the Federal income tax incentives for historic preservation as specified in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. I want to thank you for your organization's participation in the appeal hearing on February 18, 2010, and for providing a detailed account of the circumstances involved in your appeal.

After carefully considering the complete record and all available documentation, including the information provided as part of your appeal, I have determined that at the time of your application for certification of significance, the building at 531 Ninth Street, Augusta, Georgia, no longer contributed to the Augusta Downtown Historic District in which it is located. Accordingly, the opinion issued by National Register on December 15, 2009, denying "certified historic structure" status for this building is hereby affirmed.

The Standards for Evaluating Significance Within Registered Historic Districts, which may be found at 36 CFR § 67.5, define a building which contributes to the significance of a district as, "*one which by location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association adds to the district's sense of time and place and historical development.*" Id. at § 67.5(a)(1). Conversely, a building that lacks significance within a historic district is one that does not contribute to the special qualities or characteristics that identify the place, or is one where particular features, "*have been so altered or have so deteriorated that the overall integrity of the building has been irretrievably lost.*" Id. at § 67.5(a)(2).

The building at 531 Ninth Street was constructed c. 1921, as a two-story, rectangular-shaped, red-brick building with a rear fly-space. The building was built for commercial use and served as a theater and a restaurant with upstairs rooms for rent. Located near the former Union Depot, these and other businesses along Ninth Street served the railroad traveling public. The Red Star Café catered to an African-American clientele and it was considered the most upscale place for blacks to dine for many years. It closed c. 1982.

Since the 1980s, the building has been vacant and has suffered severe deterioration. A previous owner attempted to create residential units in the rear section of the building but the project was never

completed. The wooden and glass elements on the front façade date from a c. 1994, HUD-funded, city façade improvement project. Aerial photographs from 2002 and 2007 show roof damage and its partial collapse onto the second floor. In 2009, due to further exposure to natural elements and the weight of the roofing materials, the second floor space over the former restaurant collapsed. However, only unstable debris was cleared and nothing structurally sound was demolished. The central bay of the front façade is now gone.

I note that the Part 1 application lacks adequate documentation of the building's appearance and evolution over time, particularly the front façade prior to the c. 1994 improvements and the interior prior to the 2009 roof collapse and debris clearance.

After thoroughly considering the available documentation, I have determined that the overall historic physical integrity of the building has been irretrievably lost due to the extensive loss of historic fabric caused by the collapse of the roof, and the subsequent removal of virtually all of the remaining historic features and materials from the interior, leaving only the perimeter walls. In addition, I have determined that the integrity of the front façade has been severely compromised, by the c. 1994 façade improvement project and by the 2009 collapse of the middle third of the front façade. Finally, while the rear section of the building retains its roof and interior structure, I have determined that its historic integrity has been severely compromised by the incomplete conversion to residential units.

In summary, based on the documentation presented, 531 Ninth Street does not retain sufficient historic integrity to add to the district's sense of materials, association, and feeling. Accordingly, I find that the subject building is not a "certified historic structure" for purposes of Federal tax laws. However, if additional information is discovered that provides documentary evidence of the building's interior and front façade, particularly from the c. 1920s to 1967 (the Augusta Downtown Historic District's ending period of significance) I would be happy to reevaluate my decision.

As Department of Interior regulations provide, my decision is the final administrative decision regarding certifications of significance. A copy of this decision will be provided to the Internal Revenue Service. Questions concerning specific tax consequences of this decision, or interpretations of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 should be addressed to the appropriate office of the Internal Revenue Service.

Sincerely,



John A. Burns, FAIA  
Chief Appeals Officer  
Cultural Resources

cc: SHPO-GA  
IRS